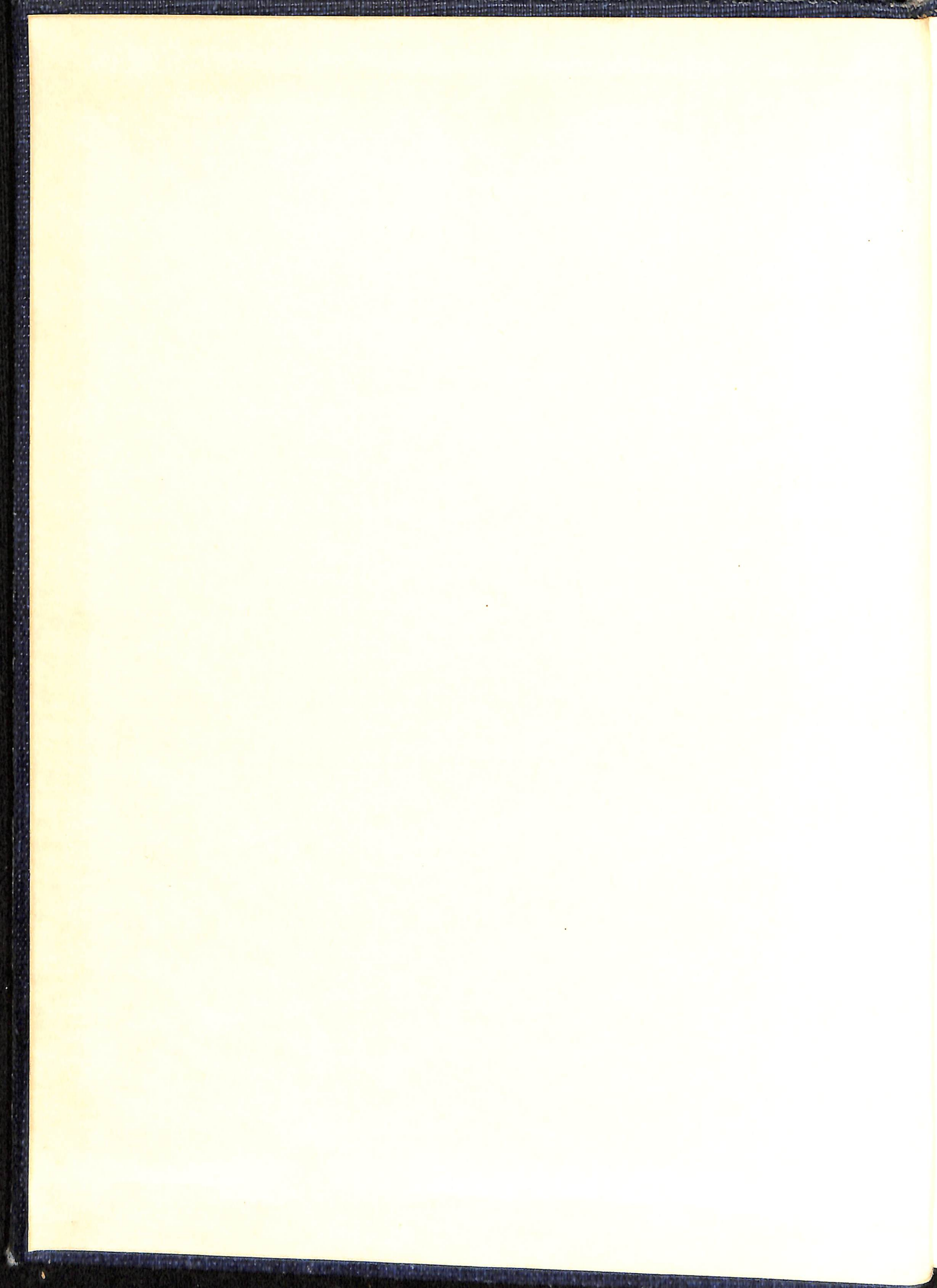




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K. V. D.

With Love



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K. V. D.
With Love



*Conceived in August of 1960 by
Katharine V. Dickinson Memorial Association.
Presented to Hayner Public Library of Alton
for safe keeping, that those who come after us
may also feel the inspiration
of a dedicated woman.*

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KATHARINE V. DICKINSON
MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION

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B Dickinson

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A grave stone in a cemetery is a small thing
but what volumes of living may be recorded
between the numbers for the

BORN

1864

DIED

1931

CONTENTS

Foreword	9
A Youthful Portrait	10
A Life's Love	11
Organizations	23
And, At Last, Tribute	35
A Portrait — "Maturity"	36
A Letter from Katharine V. Dickinson	74

FOREWORD

This book is a gathering together of material from the treasured years of cultural development emanating from the Studio School of Music in our city. There, a woman of queenly bearing, Miss Katharine V. Dickinson filled her world with harmony. From her flowed an electrifying energized glow of inspiration throughout the whole community producing an ever widening circle of culture and benevolence.

One did not have to be a musician to be embraced in her enthusiasm and gathered into her circle, for she believed that "What music does to people is more important than what people do to music."

Should the reader wonder why thirty years later we choose to establish this memorial, we quote Daniel H. Burman, "A noble, logical diagram once recorded will never die, but long after we are gone will be a living thing, asserting itself with ever-growing insistency."

Katharine V. Dickinson's life principals made such a diagram. Her work still lives in and for this community, which was a better place for her coming.

Mamie Mook Hawkins

Mary J. Maguire



A LIFE'S LOVE

BORN

During the summer of 1890 a small advertisement appeared in the back columns of a nationally prominent music magazine.

The same summer a well poised and purposeful young woman had come from her home in Lowville, New York to visit her older sister and her family in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Helen, the six year old niece, adored her "Aunt Kitty", and, four year old Roy tagged shyly after her.

Although of different dispositions, the Dickinson sisters, Ida and Katharine Violet, lived for and around Ida's husband, Doctor William Asbury Hall. An esteemed and busy physician Doctor Hall, nevertheless, rarely missed the evening dinner at the head of the long, damask covered table in his gracious home. This home became through the years a way of life and a refuge. Later, after the death of her second husband, "Grandma O'Donnell", Ida's and Katharine's mother came also to live there.

The Dickinson sisters were having a wonderful time this summer of 1890, playing with the children, picnicking out in the park at the head of the Mississippi River and the lake near-by, sewing and entertaining.

It was in August that Katharine picked up the newly delivered magazine from the piano, flipped the back pages carelessly. Suddenly a single column, square box advertisement attracted her attention:

SHURTLEFF COLLEGE

Alton, Illinois

Wanted

A qualified Voice Instructor

Chaperoned living quarters

in The YOUNG LADIES HOME

Under direct supervision of

Miss Ruth Mills, Lady Principal

The end of August found Katharine V. Dickinson composing herself in a section of the sleeping car of the train to Alton. Her trunk was in the baggage car her various bags around her and a pile of reading matter: a Shurtleff College Catalogue with several copies of the monthly College Review, a lively commentary on college life, and a few books on teaching and harmony.

As Katharine watched out the window of the fast moving train, the hills and the trees, the towns and stations seemed in another world. Her long skirted dark suit was most becoming. A moment she noticed her reflection in the window frame mirror, — the puffed sleeves of her tight waisted jacket framed the serious face above the frilled and black ribboned neck band of her dainty white blouse. With a nod of satisfaction she noticed that the soft folds of the navy velvet turban her sister had quickly made for her covered her French knot of dark brown hair most becomingly, while the bunch of violets a little to the left, dipped over her softly curled bangs bringing out the deep violet lights in her thoughtful eyes.

The hills passed. The trees closed along the tracks. Her memory pictured the eastern hills of her girlhood home. Such full years had been lived there.

At twenty six, Katharine looked back with wonder and a little sadness for the child whose father had died as a young man. A partner in Horace Greely's newspaper office in Lowville, Mr. Dickinson had brought to his home the interest of a busy, changing world, a human world full of all kinds of people. At an early age she had learned what worth and interest there might be in the oddest of places and people.

And then Papa O'Donnell had come to make the sun shine again for her darling mother and sister. He had helped her understand how everyone should have a chance to go out into the world to earn his living if he truly wanted to and had something to offer that people needed.

Suddenly Katharine thought of this as she remembered the day her teacher Madame Doria Devine in Boston met her at the door of her studio exclaiming, "Oh, Miss Dickinson, how glad I am you are here! One of my teachers who has been taking care of the school in Salem is quite ill, and I wondered if you wouldn't like to substitute for her."

Katharine was too startled to think! She had never felt herself a teacher. She knew it had been agony to go through the necessary recitals in her voice and piano work but to pass on what she had learned and truly loved, just to sing and play enough to show someone else how it was done, — Madame Devine went on,

"I consider this an opportunity for you to find out what you can do for other people with your years of training and earnest way of study and practice."

Then, as suddenly as the panic had gripped her, a newly opened door seemed to be in front of her. She wanted very much to go through it and find out what was there. "Do you think I could?" she asked. Mme. Devine's arm lay gently across her shoulders. She was saying, "Katharine, nothing would make me happier than to have you try."

And presently Katharine found herself in the Salem school showing the children how to open their mouths wide and loosely, how to breathe in, deep down and hold the breath letting it out slowly, and the children sang. When she went home she gathered the young people in her neighborhood, and they sang. She gathered the young people, as a choir in the church and they sang for her! She was very happy.

The title of the open book in her lap, with which Katharine had camouflaged her flowing stream of thought, then claimed her attention. "Teaching, an Art" had been a treasured part of her own preparation for teaching. "What was the difference between profession and art?", she asked herself. "That of which one professes knowledge" was the definition given for profession. The chosen definition for Art: "Application of skill and taste to production according to aesthetic principles". Aesthetic was explained as "Appreciation of the beautiful or in accord with its principles". Could aesthetic be the word to explain the difference in her feeling about her own singing and what came forth from her pupils? It was as though she had given them a part of herself that created in them what she herself wanted more than anything in the world. She could watch it, listen to it and when it became, as her judgement dictated, beautiful, she could tell them, "Beautiful!" Then joy came into her own soul as it came into their faces.

Was that what teaching really was? giving your soul's true desire to some one else? Katharine pondered this and she pondered the years back in her home in Lowville. Would she be dreadfully homesick away from the gentle, gracious living? Where was she going to live in Alton? How in the world had she ever found courage enough to try living away from home? "The Young Ladies Home, under direct supervision of Miss Ruth Mills, Lady Principal". Probably that would be her headquarters. She wondered if at twenty-six out here in Illinois she would still be considered a young lady. No, at twenty-six one had become a confirmed "maiden lady" who must guard herself with sedate living and wise purpose and remain a "Maiden Lady". But somehow that moment of exuberant joy in the realization that she could bring song to life in the world had given her a sense of vital

creation. Her whole being yearned toward helping anyone who wished to sing, to bring forth the song. As though her stage had been set for a new scene, girlhood loves were forgotten; there was no desire to give her creative energy save through her teaching.

Who can follow those hours of Katharine V. Dickinson's transition from a sheltered member of a traditionally sedate family, whose women were married to make homes and families, into the life of a dedicated woman living through the music she fostered? Perhaps the dream was born that afternoon, perhaps through the night in the sleeper and there was the next day down from Chicago. Certainly it was born. By the time she reached Alton she was ready to meet her chosen adventure with grace and assured dignity.

And so we title the next chapter

IN PROGRESS

Actually the first recorded account of Miss Dickinson's arrival in Alton and activities at Shurtleff College is in the September 1890 issue of "College Review."

"Our regret at the loss of Miss Gertrude Pease in the school of Music and Art is tempered by the fact that in her successor Miss Katharine V. Dickinson the college has secured a trained and qualified Vocal Instructor. It is the desire of the college to furnish a first class education in music both vocal and instrumental. We are glad to note the good prospects of the musical department for the current year". (These records were preserved when Southern Illinois University bought Shurtleff.)

Preceding this announcement there is one note in the Review's "Locals and Personals" for September, 1889 that portrays the Musical Department make up when Miss Dickinson came to Shurtleff:

"Miss Ruth C. Mills, Lady Principal, after Miss Mattie Kendrick has come from an eastern visit to accept the position of librarian in the College, will give her whole time to the Musical Department." From the same source a year earlier we find on Nov. 12, 1889 "A Recital given by the Musical Department passed off in its usual pleasant way." And from the Jan. 1890 Review:

"Miss Pease, the vocalist of our College was taken quite sick with La Grippe upon her return after the holidays." Prior to this in the spring of 1889 the Review and "Catalogue" both describe Shurtleff's new institution: "The Young Ladies Home, under the direct supervision of Miss Mills, Lady Principal, who will be as-

sisted in its management by the President, Reverend A. A. Kendricks. The young ladies enjoying its advantages will be expected to comply cheerfully with the regulations imposed relating chiefly to hours of study, reception of visitors, deportment etc. These regulations are regarded as absolutely indispensable to a quiet and orderly home for Young Ladies who are seeking a thorough education and whose object in attending this college is to secure a superior education under good social and moral influence."

Again, there is no record but it was probably in this "Young Ladies Home" that Katharine Dickinson established her first resting place in Alton. Miss Ruth Mills, the Lady Principal, lived in her father's home across the street from the College and so the two teachers could have found it easy to talk over their work and plan together. The increased enthusiasm of the Music Department's College Review notices indicates spurred interest of both pupils and the public: (April of 1891.) "The School of Music and Arts deserves special commendation in our columns. We confidently expect to graduate a small class from that department at the end of the year." And this for May, 1891: "The Musical Department has given nine recitals this year. The Choral Union appearing on all programs has shown marked improvement."

And then comes the final bouquet of the year: "Wednesday evening, June 3, 1891:

"In spite of inclement weather a large number of citizens attended the recital given by the Shurtleff Musical Department marking completion of the course in Vocal Music.

"Miss Alwine T. Meuller, Upper Alton, and Miss May Van Hooser the two graduates of the year, first in the Vocal Department had solo parts in the Ladies Chorus, Salamanca.

"Miss Van Hooser and Miss Mueller although both suffering from ill health attended the reception after the recital, which was in all respects a pleasing success."

Then, as a sort of editorial at the end: "Both of our teachers have been earnest and faithful in their efforts to promote the interests of their pupils and to advance the public appreciation of truly good music. The recitals through the year, although not largely attended, were always enjoyable and instructive. We do not forget each one cost much thought and careful drill from our esteemed teachers who deserve the gratitude, not merely of the pupils, but of the entire community."

And so with as little ostentation as characterized her entire life, Katharine V. Dickinson completed her first full year of teach-

ing in Alton without a single public mention of her name after the first acknowledgement of her presence in the Musical Department of Shurtleff College.

Nevertheless, with a little study of these advancing notices it is interesting to find a gentle presence underneath the wording, an essence of growing interest and response, windows of the soul opened here and there to widen vision and deepen resolve.

The following year Katharine had set her feet upon the next step toward her home in Alton. She and Miss Mills had found much in common in their ideals for teaching and that they were much too advanced to agree with the set ideas of Shurtleff's Directing Board . . . Here again, no record, but it would have been quite natural for them to have gone on with their teaching in the old Mills homestead on College Avenue for a year while plans for a school of their own matured.

The widely inclusive and beautifully printed "PROGRAM" for the year 1892 - 1893 and the summer term, beginning June 1, '93 with a little imagination gives an amazingly clear picture of the desire for culture of Alton's young people and the scope of the desire in the minds and hearts of Ruth Mills and Katharine Dickinson to fulfill it.

"ALTON CONSERVATORY incorporated.

"With the design of furnishing to the friends of liberal culture in Alton and vicinity, a School of Music and the liberal Arts, The ALTON CONSERVATORY has been incorporated, with ample capital to insure its successful development as a school worthy of patronage.

"THE LOCATION

"The rooms in Alton comprise the whole of the second floor of the Ryder building at the corner of Second and Alby Streets. These rooms are well lighted and adapted for Music, Art and Education, and have been decorated and prepared especially for Conservatory work. The rooms can be used as one for chorus and recital purposes. In Upper Alton, the rooms are on College Avenue near Seminary Street. To accomodate patrons, instruction will be given at both locations."

There are twelve names on "THE FACULTY" list with nine "Branches of Instruction" divided between them. Three of the faculty were assistant piano and voice teachers. Miss Ruth C. Mills heads the list with "Piano and Special Studies", then comes "Katharine V. Dickinson — Voice Culture, Delsarte and History", Miss Rose Sanders — Kindergarten and Delsarte", "Henry E. Mills, Esq., Secretary" ends the list. Outstanding among the studies are "Training of Music Teachers for Public Schools etc." and "Formation and cultivation of the voice and Lyric Art". There are listed on the "Board of Visitors" seven husband and wife teams of prominent Alton people. A "Department of General Information" is included and beside a list of the pupils under each of the twelve "Branches" there is an alphabetical list of the entire enrollment of one hundred and ninety three pupils. The "Extra Activities" social as well as educational take three pages. And upon close inspection of the whole catalogue recompense of any kind is quite unmentioned!

With a school so ambitious a down town building was a necessity and it was the Ryder Building (now housing the Krug Floral Shop) where most of the musical programs and Children's activities were conducted. Miss Dickinson was in charge there and had her living room at the front end of the long upper hall.

* * * * *

What gentle memories slide across the screen!

When dreams go back, Adventure for a time is queen.

An eight year old girl, living on Prospect Street awakens before a March dawn. There is only darkness out her window except that the street light shines in on her clock to tell her it is five thirty, but she can see in her mind all the streets down town from her hill top by the river. She shivers with excitement as she feels on the chair by her bed for the clothes she has laid there last night. Quickly she slides into them and out of bed, the street light shining enough on her dresser mirror to brush back her brown curls. Then hat and coat from the closet, - tip-toe, tip-toe, her stiff, new music book from the table and softly, softly she steals down the front stairs.

No one heard her heart beating or the front door closing nor the hop skip and jump down the shortest hill past the old cathedral. Suddenly the tower bells rang out clear and bright and she knew it was quarter to six. Oh, how happy her teacher would be! She'd

get down for her music lesson before any of the others, first of all, just to show her new teacher how much she wanted to please her.

Breathing fast and smiling secretly she ran down the next hill, and, careful, - careful now which corner is to turn? Oh yes, the one by the mill and then straight up ever so far. And then, far behind, the bells again just as she tiptoed up the long flight of stairs to the upper hall of the old Ryder building. Deliciously she relished the feeling all over her of bringing a gift to some one she loved, as she knocked softly on the door where she had learned her teacher lived.

"Who's there?" a gentle voice queried.

The little girl pulled herself up to the high keyhole and called back, "It's me! I learned 'The Happy Farmer' now. Want to hear it?"

After sixty five years there is still a sense of excitement as memory brings again that kindly smiling face above me and the warmth of Dear Teacher's arms around me.

"Why, Mary Esther, you've come to have breakfast with me! Take off your hat and coat, while I call your mother so she won't be worried about you, and you may play for me while I put our breakfast on."

My feet dangled a little from the piano stool. It had to be screwed up to get the curved fingers that made just the soft caress Dear Teacher coaxingly taught us all to admire. And I still remember how "The Happy Farmer" tinkled out, as the warm sun rose and shone in through the long windows beside the piano and out again across the sparkling river and over the green wheat-land beyond. The whole world was dawning, the rosy tint suffused my soul, "The Happy Farmer" tinkled very softly and my fingers slid from the keys. I dreamed of growing up and looking like my teacher, - at least wearing a high lacy collar with a black velvet ribbon tied round the top. And then we had breakfast together, - oatmeal with butter on it, sugar buns and cocoa. The end of the hour I do not remember at all!

Ah., but even after sixty five years memory brings to life again those old rooms full of music, children, young men and women Grecian robed and weaving in a graceful dance. And always, always that hopeful, gentle presence among us.

The Delsarte teacher would look up when Miss Dickinson came in. The children waved their arms and danced their prettiest floating steps; softly the magic pitch pipe blew; the children held out their arms and sank slowly to the floor, cross legged with

bowed heads. Softly came the count to ten; again the "Do" sound; Miss Dickinson's arms floated out and softly, like a dream, the children sang. And when the end of the song came the little ones carried it home in their minds and hearts for memory.

And these ways of her teaching widened; the number of her pupils grew; here and there came little tragedies to mark the other smoothness of the ways. And Miss Dickinson found once more the walls of her directed program too small and stilted to allow her own dreams to breathe. There were those who had grown up under her who needed wider interests; the public schools called her; she remembered a firm out east who provided singing charts by which to teach the youngest pupils to read music; some of the fathers and mothers were definitely interested in travel talks and study and she had seen advertised a series of lessons for a mothers group study. And Katharine Dickinson pondered over all these things.

About this time a group of young men in Alton pooled their resources and their desire for a recreation center, bought an unused lot at the foot of the sheer rock bluffs along Belle Street near Fourth, other people became interested and presently a useful and pleasant club building added much to Alton's entertaining possibilities. The Spaulding Auditorium, it was called. A gymnasium below, above a five hundred seat and small stage auditorium was at the back of halls on two floors with pleasant airy rooms for rent along the front.

How strangely sometimes entirely separate purposes converge and emerge a new born undertaking!

Sometime during the year of 1899 Katharine V. Dickinson placed a neatly lettered sign "THE STUDIO SCHOOL OF MUSIC" upon the door of the room at the end of the second floor hall in the new building! It was a small happy room that looked out on the sheer rock wall behind where matrimonial vines trailed down over the jutting stone and weeds bloomed from the crevices in June. Above loomed the old Cathedral with its crosstipped steeples.

And when the door into the Big Room opened it was like the beginning of a new world. Whoever went into that room began to discover what Music really meant. A song did not come truly until physical conditions had been met, it could not let forth its full meaning until the mind had bid the voice forget the earth and pour out a trail of glory to the skies. And finally, all the voices joined in never to be forgotten entertainments in the auditorium.

It was at the beginning of this time, during 1898 that the most exciting thing happened at the home of the little girl who lived on Prospect St. The spring after she was twelve a new living room and bath room had been built as a third floor to her home. One day while they were working together her mother said to her, "How would you like to have Miss Dickinson come to live in the new room and be our Big Sister?"

Like a bright sun rising to shine on her windows came the thought of Katharine Violet sleeping up on the top floor and being there to explain things and be part of their family! The little girl's sister was only four and the three boys weren't much fun to play with now that Mary Esther was growing up. And to have Katharine Violet, —

"Oh, Mother! I'll make her bed every day." she said, reaching up to hug and kiss her mother.

"Good," said her mother, "She'll be here tonight. I'll give you the sheets and you can run up and make her bed right now."

It was Saturday morning and the beginning of eight years of delightful companionship and widened learning. With ankle length skirts and curls tied back and an insatiable curiosity about what was in the mind of everyone she met, Mary Esther felt her way through high school, — she sang but it did not answer all the longing for expression, and suddenly one day early in the morning she wrote a story that just came to her and when she brought it to Miss Dickinson she read it with interest. "Could you work with this a little and adapt it to the selections the Middle Grade children are doing to make a story-recital for us?" And it was then that into Mary Esther's mind came music round the words that in the end made a happy entertainment as she read the story at the side of the stage when the children played their June program. Beside, when another year was finished she had received a crisp check for her effort, from the same magazine in which Katharine Dickinson had seen the advertisement that brought her to Alton!

And for the next Spring concert Katharine Violet gave her "The Blessed Damoiselle" to sing and "leaning out the window of Heaven", she forgot anyone was listening and the voice so long wishful and shy with the fullness in her heart sang down across the audience and back to Heaven! The Little Girl at last grown up was soon to be married.

FULFILLED

The Prospect Street home had changed: the mother had been very ill, the younger children away at school, often the father traveled, so when Mary Esther married, Katharine V. Dickinson, too, decided it was time for her to become head of her own home. Fortune favored when two rooms on the long second hall of the Spaulding Building were vacated, and soon The Studio was a well equipped apartment beside being a resting and growing place for anyone interested in any kind of creative development.

A sort of beloved family grew up within The Studio. Just once there seemed the faintest chance that Katharine might be so loved that she would choose a master other than her dedication to teaching. But instead she found a charming pupil youngly enamored of the suitor and presently Katharine helped officiate at the wedding.

And once there was a beautiful wedding at The Studio. A talented young woman, Miss Mary Dickinson had come from Lowville to teach Elocution in her Aunt Kitty's Studio home and was sharing her apartment when Western Military Academy in Upper Alton offered her an excellent position and it wasn't long until much to Aunt Kitty's delight, Mary confided to her that she was engaged to a young officer at school and could she have the wedding at The Studio?

New things came to The Studio: a class for mothers fostered a series of lectures and study that brought harmonious living to more than one frustrated young woman's life, and taught her possibilities in the astonishing and aggravating escapades of her young.

About the time the little girl from Prospect Street had accumulated a few children herself a Music kindergarten under Miss Eunice Draper took even quite young children to the Big Room at The Studio. The little ones came home with some wise translations of sounds around the house. A four year old listening to the noon hour chime and strike of the Big Ben clock in her hall remarked, "Mama, you know what? Martha's clock strikes black but our clock strikes red!" And Mary Esther knew that her child, too, had come under the spell of Miss Dickinson. The Music Kindergarten showed the merging of sight and hearing.

And so hardly a child of all the children Miss Dickinson taught but has gone out into the world with some idea of bringing harmony into any walk of life they pursue. A sort of ever growing monument has risen from the stepping stones of the Studio School of Music.

Life spent itself; the years passed; the Spaulding Building wore out. A little while the lovely lady who had graced its corridors was sad and hardly knew where to find another home. Then, as suddenly as many things had happened in her life, it was possible for her to move into the big, old Boals house on sixth and Langdon Streets.

What a wonderful place to make a home! The broad stairs and upper hall; the comfortable bed rooms on the second floor; the two long rooms and a small study below were perfect for teaching and entertaining. How Miss Dickinson revelled in at last being able to feel at home in a gracious abiding place.

The sad death of her sister's husband, Dr. Hall, brought her sister Ida to share the new home. Roy had married and lived in Minneapolis, Helen, as registrar of Rose Manor Junior College, was in Wellesley, Mass. A natural companionship was renewed and enlarged giving this span of Katharine's life a richness and comfort that blessed her abundantly.

A few years passed in this happy fulfillment and then a curtain that had a long time hung in the backdrop of these shifting scenes fell, gray and enveloping over The Studio.

Early in September of 1931 Katharine Violet Dickinson, as quietly and graciously went through the last scene of her years as any queenly actress of any of the beautiful operas she had brought to life upon the stage.

The stately lady gowned in lavender lay serenely in her casket at the end of the long music room in the old home on Sixth Street. Two days the loving tribute of any who had known her was brought and laid at her feet.

"Do you think we could give her the corner of our lot at the Cemetery for her resting place?" asked the husband of the little girl whose home she had shared, whose children she had taught, whose life she had given release and direction to. He had been very close to "last resting place" himself and the first time he left his hospital room was to watch from the yard the long procession of horse drawn carriages that escorted the mortal frame of Katharine Violet Dickinson to the last room of her home upon earth.

But no failing body, no dark curtain, no separation of spirit could seal off the memory of one who had so completely dedicated her life to the good of her chosen city.

Mary Esther Sparks Cousley

ORGANIZATIONS

SPONSORED BY

MISS DICKINSON

That Have Benefitted Alton

CAMERATA CHORUS

In the autumn of 1898 a group of seven young women, Misses Mary Hastings, Emma Harris, Sarah Hudson, Rose Miller, May O'Haver, Maude Powell and Mae Quigley who had started as a class taught by Miss Katharine V. Dickinson in the Alton Conservatory of Music came into The Studio School of Music founded by Miss Dickinson.

This group, preparing to teach Public School Music, chose as a name for their class "The Dominant Seven". Later, one more entered the class (Rita Webster). This caused them to coin the name "Octave Class". Soon a few more names were added to the class roll, - Misses Bertha Ferguson, Agnes Toohey, Mae Paul and Olive Gillham, and their studies included History and Appreciation of Music, as well as chorus singing.

Their purpose was to work together in Music for the advancement of their Community. The name "Camerata" was chosen. This name, meaning "comrades" was adopted from that of a group of intellectual enthusiasts who, in the last decade of the 16th century, met in the library of Count Bardi, Florence, Italy, to discuss art, literature and the drama and called themselves the "Camerata". From their studies of the Greek drama resulted the invention of the Opera. 'A desire to work as "comrades" for the new idea "Music for Service" inspired the adoption of the time-honored name'.

Foundation

The Camerata Chorus was organized in the year 1898 under the direction of Miss Katharine V. Dickinson, and started with a membership of thirteen young women. Their thirty year bulletin lists a membership of one hundred men and women.

History

By January 27th, 1900 the thirteen women had prepared their first recital or concert and on June 12th participated with the Octave Class in Commencement programs. By December 29th they started on their quest of Music for Service by singing a program and providing gifts for ladies residing in Alton Women's Home.

Continuing their quest, June 1901 they provided music numbers in Upper Alton High School Commencement and for the Women's Christian Temperance Union Convention program that year.

On and on thru the years a constantly broadening program of music study, and the presentation of more ambitious music compositions, paralleled by benefit concerts supplemented by social activities provided funds to initiate, support or continue some community need.

Usually two concerts were presented each year, one in June of commencement recital type was without entrance fee - - a graduates' recital to enhance community appreciation. The other, provided funds to the extent of \$10,000.00 for community needs.

Each of these activities was motivated to develop the abilities of individuals in our community. The operatic roles, orchestral accompanists, were local people trained to the level of artistry by the more than dynamic leader. No talent was imported.

Activities

The Camerata annually produced standard cantatas and oratorios, besides three original Pageants or masques:

1. Original "*Cycle Poetry and Music*" written by B. C. Richardson, 2. "*Growth of Music in America*" compiled by Miss Dickinson, and 3. "*Birth of the Opera Pageant*" - - author Mrs. Kirk Mook (now Mrs. Palmer Hawkins), and nine consecutive Christmas programs at which a tree for underprivileged children was the center, — Christmas Mystery Plays, one of which, — the Dream of Mary was given twice.

Also eight standard light Operas were presented. List of these are appended and original copies of the programs have been presented by Mrs. Oscar Paul. These are enclosed with the Chorus scrap book and minutes in a permanent container which is preserved in the Hayner Public Library.

The Camerata promoted the establishment of the Visiting Nurse, under the Alton Public Health Association, the observance of National Music Week, and the Alton Civic Music Association. For this last a community piano was provided. It was placed in the Alton Senior High School Auditorium. (It is still there.) First payments were made by Camerata, the final debt cleared by proceeds from public school activities.

The Chorus sponsored the MacDowell Club and with the cooperation of the then Mayor Sauvage entertained the second Convention of the Illinois Federation of Music Clubs.

The Chorus participated in the exercises when the Studio Alumni Association presented the Scholarship for study of Public School Music, funds for which were provided from the Alumni Treasury.

It was Miss Dickinson's wish that the Camerata be continued but in the Secretary's last report is recorded a Memorial Service for her January 19th, 1932, and June 23rd, 1932 that the organization was disbanded.

Signed,

Maud Powell Sawyer,
Member of the original CAMERATA

From the Alton Evening Telegraph 6-23-32

at the time the Camerata was disbanded

"THESE THINGS SHALL LIVE"

Though at first Alton may view only with regret the passing of its Camerata Chorus as an active adjunct of its civic life, on second thought it must allow thankfulness to overcome that first thought - - - thankfulness that it could have had such an organization.

For without the Camerata, the city now would be without many benefits which it still has and which may be expected to live on, many years to come.

Though its name be not engraved upon them, other and even greater institutions will live on in the city, memorials to the Camerata Chorus, whose spirit and lifeblood many believed was Katharine V. Dickinson. Among the outstanding examples must be numbered the Associated Charities, which stands by, now and in the future, ready to relieve the suffering of many.

Who, if he ever saw it, (and many hundreds could witness its performance because Miss Dickinson insisted that they be free) could forget the grace of performance and the beauty of lesson in "The Dream of Mary"?

Other more subtle but even stronger forces were set at work in the city by Miss Dickinson and the Camerata. Though the name and the organization themselves may be forgotten, the city always will be better off for having had them in its midst.

Joe Dromgoole

The MacDowell Club of the Studio School of Music

The MacDowell Club was an organization for junior students, named for the American composer, Edward MacDowell. At first it was open only to students of the Studio School of Music but later membership was extended to any junior student of music from the third grade up.

Mrs. Adele Nicolet Ernst was the first counselor. Later after it had grown, it was divided into a senior and junior department with Laretta Bierbaum, senior counselor and Cordelia Schuette, junior counselor.

The meetings were held once a month, in the studio rooms and the club had, besides its officers, elected from the membership, a board of directors consisting of various teachers of the city, with Miss Dickinson.

A course of study in music appreciation was followed and a Music Festival was held annually at the close of the season.

The club engaged such outstanding personalities as Mrs. Edward MacDowell for piano - - forte lecture recital. Lorado Taft for a lecture upon "American Sculpture" and in connection with one Music Festival, Judge Charles Claflin Allen who was an annual contributor to the MacDowell Colony for American Creative Artists.

It had the co-operation of the Camerata Chorus and several church choirs in a musical cycle, "The Christian Year in Song".

The club slogan, "We've looked at things until our eyes are sore, We want to know what our ears are for," indicated the plan of its course of study and the policy of its public presentations.

Laretta M. Bierbaum

The fall of 1912 Miss Dickinson opened the kindergarten in the Studio School of Music. It was my privilege to assist as teacher. There were 12 children who came, always eager and happy.

The Blue Room, with the piano, small tables and chairs, with new materials and everything to interest the children, was always ready for them when they came in the morning.

One of the outstanding memories is the Christmas Party for less fortunate children, held in the Spaulding Auditorium. Well do I recall one year the children singing "Silent Night" and "O Little Town of Bethlehem" as they came for their gifts and treats. What a joy it was to see the faces of the children, who had so little, receive their gifts!

I shall always remember Miss Dickinson as one who had a great deal of influence in my life. It was in the Studio I met Rachel Ryrie, affectionately known as Miss Rae. I lived with her 22 years until she was called home to be with the Lord whom she loved.

Today I am still teaching children as director of child evangelism and am very happy in His service. Many of us recall the unselfish, untiring, and lovely Miss Dickinson who did so much for all who came to the Studio.

Eunice Draper
First Teacher of Music Kindergarten

THE ALTON PUBLIC HEALTH COUNCIL

As sponsored by Miss Dickinson and Camerata Chorus

After a few years of promoting the Christmas Tree charities for Alton, the Camerata Chorus and Studio Alumni, under Miss Dickinson's suggestion and direction, branched into the possibilities of a Public Health Council. The response was immediate and gratifying.

The list of sixteen names at the "Formation Meeting" included representatives from Business, Profession and the Arts.

Dr. Mather Pfeiffenberger presided; "Dr. E. A. Cook spoke of the October convention of the State Association for the Prevention of Tuberculosis and the State Conference of Charities and Correction that were to be held in Alton." A nominating committee was chosen: Dr. Mather Pfeiffenberger, Mrs. E. E. Paden, Mrs. C. L. Beal, Mrs. H. S. Dorsey, Mr. Patrick Maguire.

"The secretary read applications from several nurses. It was voted that the nurse engaged would be paid \$90.00 per month for 3 months then \$100.00 if the work continued; also that the expense of coming from Chicago be paid by the Council. On motion adjourned."

This meeting is not dated in the report, but was evidently preceeded by these facts: Funds started with \$600.00 from The Studio groups presented in December of 1915. "MEETING OF JANUARY 12, 1916" (reports under a temporary organization) "It was moved by Mrs. H. S. Dorsey that Secretary write Miss Fulmer of the Illinois Nurses Association requesting that a nurse be sent to Alton as soon as possible. - - The motion was seconded by Miss Dickinson." Under discussion it was finally decided that the hiring of a nurse should not be deferred for further development but be accomplished at once. Miss Charlotte Todd arrived February seventh, 1916, her fare paid, her salary \$100. per month.

The first annual meeting of the Alton Public Health Council, as recorded, in long-hand, on its first printed stationery, reports for March 1, 1916, as officers "Pres. Harry B. Herb, Vice Pres. Miss K. V. Dickinson, Sec. Mrs. Henry Kranz, Treas. Mr. W. Gschwend. "Miss Charlotte Todd was engaged as Community Nurse. Other nurses to be employed as demand and finances increased.

"The object of the organization is for the improvement of the Public Health in and around Alton."

This heading in the report is followed by a modern and ambitious program, including a county tax "to support a sanatorium for the relief and cure of tuberculosis."

The financial column was assisted by the arrangement. "All calls made by Community Nurse on Met. (Metropolitan Life Insurance Co.) policy holders are paid for by that Co. at 50¢ each." Contagious diseases were not dealt with but it was noted "A feeble minded patient was placed in an institution at Lincoln." Recommended were "better public comfort stations at Rock Springs Park. In time, a public dispensary - - enforcement of spitting ordinance, commendation for the Public School nurse and the Food Inspector of the city." "The city has co-operated with free use of its ambulance" . . . and hope was expressed "of a day nursery with a free clinic in connection". This first annual report ends "while all of our aims have not yet been realized, we hope with larger membership and more finances to have realized these and many more at the end of another year."

Respectfully submitted,

Anna C. Kranz, Sec.

The organization has grown from 26 to 57 members." The treasurer's report on Dec. 31, 1916 gives total receipts of \$1,675.60, Dispersals, including nurse's salary of \$1,020.00, were \$1,174.49 balance on hand \$501.11.

"In addition to the above, various supplies have been received through the year.

Respectfully submitted,

W. C. Gschwend, treasurer

Executive Committee

Mrs. H. S. Dorsey

Miss Mary Maguire

Miss Vera Haines

As this first year went, so went many more. And I Charlotte Todd the first "Visiting Nurse" in these records feel it a rare privilege to sum up as briefly as possible the beginning and early development of this "life saving" institution in Alton, as it was directly affected by Miss Dickinson, and the group she so devotedly fostered.

In Feb. of 1917 the executive officers of Alton Public Health Council presented a small neatly printed booklet containing the Constitution and By-Laws. A card also was printed to offer a statement of the Council's make up; "Alton Public Health Council is composed of more than thirty organizations. Includes Civic, religious, social, fraternal, commercial and labor organizations. (Each organization was represented by two members.) Individuals making personal donations are members." After this is stated nineteen short sentences of accomplishments and aims. On the other side of the card are twenty two short sentences stating the Community Nurse's duties, aims and accomplishments. "Will visit any homes (only contagious diseases are barred). Will respond to calls on all week days from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. (the noon hour was spent at the office taking telephone calls and making reports). "Office in the Laura Bldg., Y.W.C.L. rooms. Telephones, Bell 862R, Kinlock 456 J."

These cards were distributed to all possible groups and there continued to be a flow of contributions and requests for new memberships.

At the end of the first year the Alton Board of Trade sent out a Questionnaire to all member organizations. The Camerata replies bring memories of strong, useful women in Alton.

"Organization, Camerata Chorus.

Representative, Miss Olive Gillham.

How many members, 40. Report read by Miss Rachel Ryrice.

Was formation of Public Health Council approved? Yes.

Were delegates to Jan. 12th meeting appointed? Yes, Misses K. V. Dickinson, Mary Dickinson and Olive Gillham.

How much will your organization contribute toward ass'n. for 1 year? \$170.00.

The cards were sent to other groups with a letter of recommendation for joining the Public Health Council. It ended, "Looking forward to the pleasure of welcoming you in our organization and cooperating with you in a great work.

Cordially and sincerely yours,

Katharine V. Dickinson

Bertha Bishop

Angela Kent Kauffman

Wm. C. Gschwend

This covers fairly well the beginning of Alton's reaching out for better health conditions for its citizens.

The Alton Public Health Council was possibly the largest, most ambitious and spontaneous group ever fostering a sort of revolution in Alton.

It only takes looking through old files of many groups and organizations to establish that the seed sown, through the eager answer of Katharine Dickinson's followers, to her forty years direction of energy and inspiration in Alton, has grown, bloomed brilliantly and brought forth seed to be sown yet again for the betterment of the town she loved and chose to live in.

I especially feel this, for after two years here and two more years in East St. Louis, I returned to Alton as Mrs. George Pfeiffenberger, to live my life, also, in the town adopted by Miss Dickinson and benefitted by the growth and maturity of Alton Public Health Council.

An interesting feature of the first year's work of the visiting nurse, was the complication she found in trying to help the many immigrant families that had come into Alton around the newly developing factory area. It was these families that needed the most help but because of their lack of knowledge of the English language it was almost impossible to get in touch with them or win their confidence. It was then that volunteers from the Health Council members hunted up an old "for rent" house near the "Illinois Glass Co." It was cleaned up for a "Neighborhood House" gathering place, and Miss Olive Gillham, a dedicated school teacher from the Camerata Chorus, held classes in English,

several nights a week. There began to be a considerable increase in response to the invitation of the Health Council to take advantage of the visiting nurse service. Calls about doubled during my second year. The Neighborhood House was a busy and happy center for old and young.

Signed,

C. T. Pfeifferberger

Altadena, Calif.

AND, AT LAST,

TRIBUTE

Whenever two or three of the old Studio group met on the street, in a store, on the post office steps, through thirty years, presently would come the question, "What can we do as a memorial for Miss Dickinson?" Now the answer has been given and we who knew her through the earlier years, present . . .

To

"K. V. D."

With Love



She shall sit in a golden chair

With a table of gold before her

Laid with the tribute of all the years

From those who still adore her.

From across the land and sea

these letters have come.

August of 1960 through July of 1961

brought them together.

How beautifully they express

the Love we have longed to show!

FROM MISS DICKINSON'S ONLY NIECE

1. During my earlier life, dear Aunt Kittie was a beloved member of our Minneapolis family, brightening vacation times with her presence. Never have I seen three people more deeply devoted to one another than mother, Aunt Kittie, and Grandma O'Donnell. They understood and really adored each other. It was a beautiful relationship of which my brother Roy and I were aware, but which we accepted, as children do as a matter of course. And until I grew older I'm sure I never truly *truly* appreciated what a great and wonderful person "our dear Aunt Kittie" was.

I remember how proud and adoring of her my mother and grandmother were. Often too, how troubled they were over her health and the driving force of her mind and heart that refused to spare herself in any way.

It was a comfort to me, as well as to mother, that she could have those few last years in the studio with "Aunt Kittie" sharing some of the domestic burdens and always up holding and sympathizing with her deep devotion to her studio family and friends.

Success to you in your project! Don't you truly believe that "your dear Kittie" is somehow conscious of this beautiful thought of her that you are perpetuating, so that others may share it and be inspired thereby? I'm sure she knows and blesses all of you, her dear friends.

Helen Hall

14 Weston Road

Wellesley 81, Massachusetts

2. I hear music when I hear her name: "Katharine Violet Dickinson". Such music as revives the soul, so full of love and memory it is. I can hear Phyllis and Stephen from "Iolanthe" sing:

"None shall part us from each other, One in life - - in death are we.

All in all to one another, I to thee and thou to me.

I the tree and thou the flower, Thou the idol, I the throng.

Thou the day and I the hour, I the singer, thou the song."

What a wonderful thing to do: Keep a memory green: There couldn't be a finer personality to honor. With this concrete plan for a "book of memories", the glorious life of this woman among women, her endless deeds of kindness will be written not in sand but warm, eternal love.

My recollections of her, span a lifetime as I first knew her in the town of my birth, Lowville, New York. When I was six years old I had my first music lesson and learned to appreciate beauty and sound from Aunt Kitty's mellow contralto voice. She was a popular singer, much in demand in church and home.

Her step-father Senator John B. O'Donnell built an attractive summer hotel at a site a few miles from Lowville in the foot hills of the Adirondack Mountains where there were several medicinal springs. It was called "The Spring House" and here Katharine Dickinson was in demand as singer and entertainer.

She trained a group of singers whose Sunday night programs were fore-runners of late popular night club programs.

It is too long a story to tell here, but I came to Alton in the early 1900's to have part in the Studio School of Music, as director of speech and dramatics. Through this opportunity I came to Western Military Academy in 1910 where I remained six years. I met my husband there and was married in 1916 to Major Frank Henderson.

My dear cousin, I always called her "Aunt Kitty", gave my wedding for me, and through her generous love and care I enjoyed the finest life anyone could have, many years of rewarding service, two wonderful sons, George and John whom I am still proud and happy to have.

Mary Dickinson Henderson

FIRST LETTER RECEIVED

3. After seeing the article in the Telegraph this week about Miss Dickinson a lot of things have been going around in my mind about her and what she did for me some 46 years ago. I came to this country from England, a girl of 14 and I had done quite a bit of singing in the old country and started to sing at quite a few places here in Alton. I lived close to Mrs. Kirk Mook, (now Mrs. Hawkins) and she took me to the Camerata Chorus and to meet my dear friend Miss Dickinson. She heard me sing and she said I had a good voice but I was straining it and she said I should join the chorus. She would like for me to take private lessons.

Well, that was out of the question because we could not afford it. So, this dear soul gave me free private lessons for two years and she also gave me an old pedal organ that she had in her studio and also paid to have it delivered to my home.

It has taken all these years for me to be able to tell some-one of my appreciation of her through this memorial to her. It is too bad that I was never able to show her what she did for me while she was here. When one gets older we do seem to appreciate things more. I never have forgotten her and am so glad to add my thanks for her memory.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Chris Miller
(Genevieve Wimpenny)
3928 Aberdeen Ave.
Alton, Illinois

MY TRIBUTE TO A BELOVED TEACHER, FRIEND, AND WONDERFUL WOMAN

4. While this is not meant to be my autobiography I feel that to clearly bring out what Katharine Dickinson meant to me I must give something of my background.

From childhood I loved Music. My earliest memories are those of my mother and father playing the piano and violin in the evening, my sister and I singing with them and sometimes dancing to their music, to their delight.

We lived in a small village adjacent to Alton where there was not an iota of culture other than a small effort on the part of some young adults in the form of a "singing school", in which I was too young to participate.

While we were poor in the broad sense of the word, we never felt the "pinch" of poverty and never lacked for any of the necessities, had many comforts and a few luxuries among which was the old-fashioned square piano for music lessons and my father's violin which he had possessed from early boyhood and had acquired through his own efforts. My father played the violin "by ear" and beautifully, I thought. Mother had some piano lessons in her girlhood, enough to play simple accompaniments to my father's violin. Papa was self taught and played everything from "The Arkansaw Traveler", "Captain Jinx" and "The Irish Washwoman" to "Il Bacio" with all its changes of key and many well known classics which I loved but did not recognize as classics until years later when I realized they belonged to many of the Old Masters. Where he picked them up I do not know.

Writing this as it comes to me, until this moment I have never realized that Miss Dickinson's influence probably touched me many years before I knew her; my first piano teacher, Miss Minnie Terry, (a beautiful and cultured young woman and a fine musician) was a product of the Alton Conservatory at about the time Miss Dickinson was connected with it and it makes me happy to think that my very first music lesson may have come indirectly from her.

How can I possibly find words to fully express what Katharine Dickinson meant to me? She it was who opened the door and spread wide before me the world of Music and the true appreciation of Music. She it was who tapped the pent up fountain of my love for Music and desire for musical expression and culture and who through her gracious example gave me a greater sympathy and fuller understanding of my fellowmen.

When I was so fortunate as to become her pupil I not only acquired a wonderful teacher and kind friend but you might say, a second mother as well. In this I was not alone for her warm and outreaching personality enveloped everyone who came in contact with her, and, without having accomplished the physical fact of motherhood she was a mother to everyone who needed mothering. Her warm sympathy and gracious personality reached out to everyone regardless of race, social standing or creed. The colored charwoman adored her as well as did the wealthiest and most socially prominent who came to her Studio. All knew alike her great interest, sympathy and kindness.

I always felt very close to her. In fact that was the feeling of each of her students. We felt that we mattered to her. This overflow of self was the secret of her tremendous influence on the lives of those with whom she came in contact.

She was a brilliant speaker and had an exceptionally fine mind; graciousness and charm of personality and appearance. Her students were strictly coached on points of behavior, deportment and poise and anyone adhering to her teaching was sure of never making a social error in any situation.

She had dynamic force and perseverance. Her favorite phrase was "We learn to do by doing" and another was "If you want anything done, ask a busy person to do it". If anyone even remotely connected with the Studio or the Camerata was so unfortunate as to incur censure or fall into error and the question of what to do about it was mentioned, her favorite answer was - - "They are good when they are with us and when they are with us they are in good company. Let's not deprive them of this opportunity. It will do us no harm and may do them a lot of good".

She was always conceiving and devising some plan to help others and I should like to mention one that is typical. Somewhere in the tri-cities, she came in contact with a young Italian boy Giovanni Sperandeo who, through a tragic accident, had lost an entire arm and part of the other. He was of humble family and had but the mere thread of a sweet tenor voice and his Italian inborn love of Music. Miss Dickinson brought him to Alton, gave him free voice lessons, secured pupils to whom he taught the Italian language (among them, myself), interested the Camerata Chorus in his welfare and engineered a concert for his benefit. The proceeds were used to purchase a mechanical arm and hand. By this time others were interested in helping him and he was given an opportunity to study Law and receive vocal training in St. Louis. He went on to be graduated from the University of South Carolina and became a professor of Romance languages. Although he continued his voice work, he did not become a great singer, but he did become a teacher of Voice as well as Romance languages and was successful at both.

Few people have thrown their whole life and self into community welfare as did this Wonder Woman.

She was my beloved teacher and friend for many happy, happy years, a person one is fortunate to meet once in a lifetime.

My last glimpse of her was as she raised herself on her elbow in her hospital bed and, the Gracious Lady to the last, waved to me through the window. The next time I saw her the kindly spirit had taken flight to that Far-off Place and *surely* that Place can be but sweeter and richer for HER GRACIOUS PRESENCE. God Bless Her For Ever.

In loving memory,
Helen Rose Yeothan
Graduate Vocal Music 1911

5. I wish that I was capable of expressing a fitting tribute in memory of Miss Katharine V. Dickinson. Though I was never a pupil of hers, I have many pleasant memories of happy hours spent in her studio as accompanist for her Camerata Chorus, and on the Friday evenings which were spent studying the works of many composers and writers. All of these gatherings were inspiring and stimulating.

Surely Miss Dickinson will rejoice in spirit over this work which you are sponsoring and I can think of no one who can so appreciate and understand the spirit of love and devotion in which it is being done.

Pauline Guy Levis

6. One of the very lovely and wonderful experiences in my life was my association with the charmingly cultured lady and accomplished musician and teacher, Miss Katharine V. Dickinson.

I consider myself fortunate to have had the privilege and benefit of both voice and piano instruction from Miss Dickinson.

I fondly recall the joy and inspiration of my studies with her and the thrill of my many appearances in her recitals and as vocal soloist in the Camerata concerts.

The Camerata Chorus, which she organized and conducted, was an outstanding choral group which brought many fine, cultural, musical events to Alton and the surrounding communities. The refinement and cultural value which Miss Dickinson brought to the Alton area will be felt throughout the years.

I can truly say that Miss Dickinson was one of those people who had a great part in the enrichment of my own life. My horizons have been extended because of my years of work and association with her.

Sincerely,
Mrs. E. R. Durham
(Susanna Vaughn)

7. This excerpt from a letter from Mr. George E. Nagel, husband of Aurelia Obermiller, shows how association with Miss Dickinson was shared with the family circle; "Aurelia often spoke of Miss Dickinson in our home and she admired her a great deal. She thought of her as being a very fine person. Aurelia passed away July 2, 1955 - - - tonight our daughter brought out a letter Aurelia received, one she had asked Miss Dickinson to write, when Aurelia wanted to start teaching. It was indeed a very fine letter that had been treasured."

Signed G. E. N.

8. As a tribute to Miss Dickinson I wish to say I enjoyed very much the days at the Studio with her in studying piano and as a member of the Chorus and orchestra which played for the operas each year.

I was aware of the many hours Miss Dickinson spent in hard work for the welfare of the community.

Very sincerely,
Madeline G. Gervig

IN APPRECIATION OF MISS DICKINSON

9. Of the many things about which I could write, it is most appropriate that I express appreciation for her fostering of Public School Music in Alton.

Miss Dickinson came to us from the East where she was aware of the work of Lowell Mason, who had just demonstrated to the Boston Board of Education, that children could be taught music reading in class groups.

As was characteristic of her, she was able to see, understand and use what was good, helpful and progressive, that which people could learn, use and enjoy; that which would satisfy, broaden and uplift.

The Alton Board of Education had recognized this new education force — 'music reading classes' because records show that Miss Mae Quigley had been appointed "teacher of Grade Two and Music," and just a little later Miss Minnie Boals had been appointed "Music Teacher".

As was characteristic of teachers then, as soon as something new was added to school room activities, many sought training in the teaching of it.

Miss Dickinson had come to Alton to instruct in Shurtleff Academy Conservatory and later assisted in Miss Mills' Studio, but very soon established her own Studio School of Music.

Here a first class of seven young women was enrolled and the name "Dominant Seventh Class" was used. An eighth member enrolled and the class was then named "Octave Class". Group singing by means of solfeggio was studied, so that they in turn might be able to teach school classes.

Because this group of eight wished to continue reading and singing together, they formed the CAMERATA CHORUS. This same group formed the Studio School of Music Alumni and soon offered an annual scholarship of fifty dollars to be used by the recipient for further study of Public School Music (1908-1916).

In those days our Normal Schools, which now have grown to be Universities, had one course in music teaching, — "Rote-song Teaching". Book publishing companies publishing "Music Reading Series," conducting a Summer School with the author and his trained assistants as instructors.

In 1914 I was the recipient of one of these scholarships, and advised by Miss Dickinson attended the second Summer Session at University of Illinois, and again in 1915. These two Summer Sessions started me toward my "Bachelor of Science of Public School Music" degree.

How gratefully and happily I express this appreciation.

Mary J. Maguire

Alton's Supervisor of Music 1915-1943
Chairman of Music 1943-1946

Tribute To Katharine V. Dickinson

By

Alton Business and Professional Women's Club

10. Katharine V. Dickinson was a charter member of the Alton Business and Professional Women's Club and a member of its first Board of Directors. She passed away shortly after the club was organized. The record of her death was placed in the Golden Book of Memory of the Illinois Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, the first name from the Alton Club.

In spite of her already full and busy life she was ready to give what aid she could to an organization which her keen sense recognized as an asset to her community, and thereby lent prestige to a worthwhile project in the City of Alton.

With her beauteous smile, her grace and culture, she can best be described by the words of Lord Byron:

"The light of love, the purity of grace,
The mind, the music breathing from her face,
The heart whose softness harmonized the whole, —
And oh, that eye was in itself a soul!"

Nellie I. Jones
President 1926-1927

Mrs. Irene Witty
President 1959-1960

11. It is a pleasure to hear about the Katharine V. Dickinson Memorial Ass'n. and to know, that after the years, the memory of all she contributed to the welfare of Alton people will be brought to the attention of those living today. So often such deeds are soon forgotten.

I met Miss Dickinson through my dear friend, Mrs. Olive Stelle, who raised \$500.00 so that I could go to New York to study voice. And it was Miss Dickinson who gave me the name of my teacher there, Madame Devine, with whom I studied several years. I am so grateful to Miss Dickinson for her interest in my career, for I was very young and only out of high school, but she must have seen that I had possibilities as a singer or perhaps she had heard me sing in the Upper Alton Baptist Church choir. At any rate I was sent to a good teacher who made it possible for me to enjoy a career in concert and oratorio work.

But it seems so long ago! I am now a paraplegic, having no use of my legs since I had a spinal operation in 1957 here. But memories are sweet and thanks to the wonders of radio and television I can enjoy the artists of today.

Thank you for letting *me* know of the Dickinson Memorial.

Louise S. Revelle
(Louise Stallings)
920 61st Street South
Saint Petersburg 7, Florida

12. Miss Katharine V. Dickinson! How memories surge with — her name. The music and voice lessons (taken between street car transfers); her Studio - - "arty" I suppose we'd call it now. And it was - - with the grand piano - - the stacks of music - - the books piled high - - the heavy drapes at the windows that gave us a kind of privacy from busy Belle Street - - and the heavy drapes to her "quarters" that gave her privacy from us!! I still wonder what was behind those swaying curtains.

I remember her so clearly: tall she seemed to a 12 year old, regal, always dressed in something soft and flowing with her only ornament a black velvet band around her throat!

Whether with head held high, acknowledging the applause at the "Temple Theatre", or seated at her piano tapping a key and trying to coax a similar sound or a reasonable facsimile thereof from me - - she remained gentle and serene.

Miss Dickinson introduced me to so many things: The MacDowell Club and the widow of that famous composer; the backstage secrets of Tony Sarg's Marionettes; the Camerata Chorus as the drummer boy; and - - afternoon tea! By chance my lesson day, Miss Dickinson was having cinnamon toast and tea and I was invited to join her. Not by chance - - because I'd hop off the street car and run for blocks - - I managed to arrive at tea time quite often.

Miss Dickinson was a darling. She did so much for the cultural life of our town, but she did even more for the personal lives of those who were fortunate enough to know her. She led me and guided me without my being aware of it! My life with all the others she taught has been enriched by knowing and loving her.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Charles Walters
(Helen Hamer Walters)
3106 Leverett Ave.
Alton, Ill.

13. Who first invited me to the Studio? I wish I could remember for that person led me to one of the most rewarding experiences I have known. The Studio which soon became like home to me had an atmosphere which seemed entirely new, and I loved being there.

As a member of the Camerata Chorus I was soon acquainted with many fine people and found a happy niche in the community.

There were lighter moments too. Should I now confess, (my fellow conspirator un-named) to the loosened spark plug wire in the car that went hopping around town several days before the driver, a well known bass, found the trouble?

Above all else in these years was my good fortune to have been "adopted" by Miss Dickinson. That great teacher and counselor of mind and heart gave me, a beginning teacher, the much needed encouragement and direction that have influenced my whole teaching career.

Miss Dickinson's graciousness of manner, her patience, her respect for the individual, her ability to teach each person to perform to the best of his ability, her kindness to all around her will remain, always, in the thoughts of the many persons who had the privilege of being associated with her.

Doris Sights Rue

Sept. 18, 1960

14. Whenever I hear any Gilbert and Sullivan music my mind turns back forty years and I recall the gay Operettas put on by the Camerata Chorus. They seemed to me, as a little girl grander than I could imagine the Metropolitan Opera to be.

Miss Dickinson gave me an appreciation of music at an early age which has brought pleasure to me all through my life.

Mary Cousley Bates
(Mrs. L. E. Bates, Jr.)
1622 E. 35th St.,
Tulsa, Okla.

15. My life has been enriched by the love of music, drama and other fine arts; having been a voice pupil of Katharine V. Dickinson and a member of the Camerata Chorus.

Her leadership as director and as a teacher has been a great influence in my life. My sister, Esther Meyer joins me in this tribute.

Cordelia Schuette

TO KATHARINE V. DICKINSON

16. To know her was to love her. A lady of great personal charm and dignity of character. Her life was devoted to the service of others and to the community in which she lived. Her influence for good affected many.

Her influence on my life began when I was young and impressionable. Having won a first place in a Regional Singing contest, I was sent to her for an audition. She believed that I had talent worth developing.

Lessons with her were a joy. Aside from music I learned many things from her, which had a lasting effect on my life. I attained poise, responsibility of having talent, and many fine points in culture.

I was one of the fortunate winners of a Studio Alumnae Scholarship. This enabled me to extend my studies to the University of Illinois. Later I became an assistant teacher at the Studio, in Voice and Piano.

Because it was her desire that I broaden my studies with Mme. Doria Devine in New York, she arranged for me to give

several benefit recitals and secured engagements as soloist with orchestras and in local and St. Louis churches.

In New York, I was privileged to live in the home of Mme. Devine. This gave me the opportunity of observing her Artist pupils during their lessons, along with my regular lessons.

On returning, I was active with Miss Dickinson in many services in the community. Such as War Bond Drives, Benefit performances for the Visiting Nurse Association, and as an entertainer at Camp Taylor. There were many other things that we assisted.

Wealth, creed or color made no difference to her. If there was talent or need, she was always ready to give a helping hand. Her charm, her unselfish devotion to others and her spiritual influence had a lasting effect on my life. One which I could never repay.

Irene Elder Meyer

TO KATHARINE V. DICKINSON

17. I shall always feel that I owe much to Katharine V. Dickinson for my many years of happiness in music and for the security I now enjoy. She was not just a fine music teacher and a far seeing expert in preparing one for work in the musical field, but a dear friend and a tireless giver of spiritual and moral inspiration.

I've worked in music all of my life in most of the commercial fields including radio, movies, orchestras, theater, writing, and in churches. I've played piano and organ, organized and directed various musical groups, starting early in the '30's on that tropical isle of Aruba in the Netherlands West Indies, and then on to many other places including Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, Hollywood, Florida, Bermuda, and even icy Dutch Harbor in the Aleutians with the Navy during the war.

My great good fortune early in life was to have known Katharine V. Dickinson and to have learned from her, two great principles of living that have brought me many blessings — "Sharing and Doing". She was ever ready to share her knowledge and rich experience of life, her music and all the arts, with all who needed or wanted them and she taught me the importance of making our MacDowell Club Motto a living truth. "We Learn To Do By Doing".

God Bless Her

Charles W. Dietz
First President of the
Junior MacDowell Club

18. Katharine Dickinson created in Alton a center of musical interest and culture. The warmth of her love for people, and her interest in their development, reached out through our Camerata Chorus and MacDowell Club to bring fellowship and happiness to many.

Miss Dickinson was a very great help and inspiration to me. She fostered and developed in all of us a knowledge and appreciation of music that has greatly enriched our lives.

Adele Nicolet Ernst
Haifa, Israel.

19.

TO OUR LEADER

*Written by Dr. A. Don Stocker
For Miss Dickinson
About 1920*

Who is it knows who needs a friend
Who fills that need without pretend
And then sticks to them to the end?
Our Leader.

Who gives her time and talents too,
To Alton, not the favored few,
The things that help both me and you?
Our Leader.

Who works with never thought of fame
To win our town a fairer name?
When things go wrong, who gets the blame?
Our Leader.

When she has won her just renown
And lays her earthly baton down,
Who's sure to wear a starry crown?
Our Leader.

20. Among my fondest recollections of the Studio were the musical and social life, the happy times spent together, Miss Dickinson being the center of all of it.

I am of the opinion that her life belonged to the whole community and as long as she lived it was her privilege to do for it whatever she could. The harder she worked the more she lived. She rejoiced in life for its own sake. I quote to you from an unknown author.

"Life was no brief candle for her but a sort of splendid torch which she got hold of for a moment and wanted to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations.

"They never quite leave us, our friends who have passed through the shadows of death to the sunlight above;

A thousand sweet memories are holding them fast to the places they blessed with their presence and love."

Mrs. A. Don Stocker
(Donna)

21. I received all my early musical training from Miss Dickinson: Piano from the sixth grade through high school, and voice from about 17 to 19 years of age. I remember her as a woman of dignity and taste, who taught with love for the pupil and with devotion to her ideal of what she knew was true in life and art.

In thinking back over my memories of what she has meant to Alton and to me, I am most impressed with her record as a pioneer and an organizer. Personally, I am most grateful for the fact that she brought musical theatre to Alton with the Camerata Chorus and their annual Gilbert and Sullivan productions. Although I was not old enough to participate until I was a senior in high school, the excitement of opera time always overflowed into Miss Dickinson's Studio, and my mother and father usually played violin and harp in the orchestra, so I got an early taste of what it takes to put on an opera. I got musical theatre into my blood then, and I haven't lost it yet!

Miss Dickinson helped form the musical taste of many a young Altonian. She not only taught us to play the piano and sing as individuals, but she brought us together socially in the MacDowell Club, and stimulated us further by bringing noted concert artists to Alton so that we could hear and see real professionals perform. That one woman could have the spirit and the energy to accomplish all that she did was truly remarkable. Shall we call it the Alton miracle?

Leonard Stocker
Chairman, Voice Dept. & Director of
Opera Workshop
Mississippi Southern College
Hattiesburg, Mississippi

St. Joseph, Missouri
October 31, 1960

22. Today I was looking for something in the piano bench - - a jumble of music books, a box of crayons, a score for drums, a two year old dog license, compositions for flute and piccolo. One old, old book of piano pieces came apart at the stitching as I lifted it out. And there on one of the pages was the almost undecipherable handwriting - - "Nov. 15, 1925, Watch fingering, Pettie."

* * * * *

The steps were steep, and the scrubbed wooden treads smelled strongly of disinfectant. The bleak hall added to a child's gloom and dread of an impending piano lesson for which the practice had been meager. The dread was not because Aunt Kit would show anger. That she never did. It was because the gay, excited look would not come to her face, "Oh, you've done that well, Pettie." Rather her eyes would become preoccupied, "Let's work a little harder for next time. And watch the fingering."

Small hands slowly opened the heavy door, and eleven-year-old eyes gazed at a transformation. Strewn all over the studio were bright dresses, plumes, cloaks. In the middle of the jumble was Aunt Kit, animatedly holding a crimson cape around her shoulders. It was opera time, and the costumes had come. The lesson went by on wings that day, with Aunt Kit, in between exercises and pieces, humming bits of tunes from the current Gilbert and Sullivan.

There were quiet, serious times, too. At recital time you'd be sent into the other room to practice that difficult passage until you knew it was what she wanted it to be.

There were cozy times, when she'd tell stories about the composers, Papa Haydn, the meticulous mathematician, Mr. Bach, how Frederic Chopin wrote his Little Dog Waltz, the trials that Beethoven went through.

Occasionally she would voice a scathing diatribe against "jazz". So impressive were these dissertations that even today I sometimes get a twinge of guilt when I find myself enjoying the beat of Rock and Roll. Forgive me, dear lady.

I think the picture I hold closest to my heart is the one of her at the director's podium during the opera performances. There was the complete woman, gracious, queenly, and fulfilled. Katharine V. Dickinson. Soft white hair waved away from her intelligent face, the blue eyes sparkling, the aquiline nose flared, the black velvet band around her tall white neck, the touch of violet in a scarf, a ribbon, or a flower somewhere about her cos-

tume, giving visual reminder of her middle name that was always only initialed.

This is the unique woman, who would be as remarkable today if she were living as she was then. Hidden beauty and drama were uncovered for all those who came into her radius. But most of all, the life-long love affair with music and the talent for teaching it to and sharing it with her fellow man brings her immortality.

With loving gratitude,
Katharine Cousley Lehr
St. Joseph, Mo.

A TRIBUTE TO MISS DICKINSON

23. Thinking of the past is like turning back precious leaves of a book and I find I do not remember the first time I went to the Studio as I was quite a small girl. The first I recall is Miss Dickinson generally sitting by me while I was taking my piano lesson, giving me new assignments when the lesson was completed. In later years I not only studied piano but accompanied voice students both at the Studio and for programs. Sometimes my sister Edna and I would play duets on programs as well as duos with other piano students at recitals.

It was a beautiful friendship that Miss Katharine V. Dickinson formed with those who came to the Studio. The influence of her love and unselfish devotion to her students, friends of the Camerata and Studio Alumni has helped in better music appreciation throughout this area.

During the two years I served as accompanist for the Camerata Chorus for their operas I learned of the great knowledge that Miss Dickinson had acquired and by which she was able to bring out the best hidden talents of the young men and women under her direction. Professional quality of the cast was obtained through the individual's hard work and Miss Dickinson's magical gift of teaching and directing.

At the time of the passing of Miss Dickinson from this earthly life I was serving as president of the Studio Alumni.

A Christmas wreath is placed on the grave of Miss Dickinson each year through funds provided by the Camerata Chorus and the Studio Alumni Association and garden flowers on her birthday, August 8th.

Emma O. Sawyer

24. A living tribute to my teacher and friend lives on in my heart.

Russel and I were privileged to be in Miss Dickinson's chorus for only one short year. But I still marvel at how she took this husband of mine, who had always lapsed into a stubborn little boy attitude of "I-don't-wanna" when asked to perform. She took his unwillingness and quickly shaped it into a pliant eagerness to please.

Never will I forget how Miss Dickinson beckoned to me with a curved finger; I left the mass of meaningless scraps which I was sorting and which under her hands become intriguing costumes. In firm tones of confidence Miss Dickinson told me that she wanted me to bring in two stanza of verse, in parody of a song from "Rudigore" which we were then preparing. "By morning," she said.

I was aghast! I stuttered and stammered, I had not the time, the energy, the inclination to do such a job! The task was impossible. It could not be done.

Well, you know the result. That night I slaved and of course the next morning I laid on Miss Dickinson's desk two stanzas of verse, in parody, of a song from Rudigore.

Memory of a remark of Miss Dickinson's still makes me chuckle: I had stepped down from rehearsal on stage to watch the chorus; I said to her that we were an oddly assorted group of figures and faces. Without inflection of any kind Miss Dickinson answered,

"That's why I put you in costume from head to toe."

Later, again watching the chorus, this time in costume, I was struck by the truth of her statement. Fat, thin, dark and fair, we looked startlingly alike. I have often wondered, since, if this similarity didn't lie deeper than the costumes. Could it have been the throb of mutual devotion in our hearts under our costumes that created the likeness?

Helen Johler Dale

Alby St., Alton

TO A GRACIOUS LADY WITH AN
UNDERSTANDING HEART

25. There were always a few married couples in Camerata. Some were talented, others less talented. For the latter Miss Dickinson always found something to occupy their time, such as making scenery, properties, posters and many other things. She kept both parties interested. I'm sure she felt married couples should enjoy things together, which in my opinion was highly commendable. It gives me pleasure to add my tribute to her memory.

Florence Mathie
R.R. 4, Godfrey, Ill.

26. When this book, a memorial to Katharine V. Dickinson, was planned by a committee of which I was a member, I took down from the shelf my box of mementoes of "The Studio". Among the programs, pictures, clippings I found a letter which I had received from Miss Dickinson a day or two after one of our annual Camerata picnics. In a beautiful choice of words she expressed her thanks to me for having arranged the outing. Reading it recalled many such words of appreciation from her lips and her pen, and my soul was lifted.

My association with her as pupil and member of the Camerata chorus was enriching indeed, and I felt deeply that she owed me no word of thanks; the situation was quite the reverse. The light of her ideals has shone through my whole life. Many times when I was depressed and uneasy, I found myself climbing the steps of the old Spaulding Building to find an understanding listener and a constant friend in Miss Dickinson. I was not the only one. There were many others.

Her influence still spreads as ripples from a pebble dropped into a pool, widening and circling outward long after the pebble has disappeared. Katharine V. Dickinson has taken "the big step from our sight", but she lives in the hearts of all those who knew her, especially in *mine*.

Mamie Mook Hawkins

27. Miss Dickinson's "finest hour" came the night of her last performance. It was as though we sensed it was to be her last. When, as she seemingly floated down the aisle of the theatre, head held high, hair beautifully coifed and the elegant black velvet band around her throat, she took her place on the

podium, and turning to bow in recognition of the applause, the audience rose as one man and the house fairly came down with a deafening tribute to Alton's outstanding citizen.

Alton loved Miss Dickinson.

Florence Reid

28. It is a pleasure to write a tribute to Miss Katharine V. Dickinson, whose influence was outstanding in the community.

She came to Alton as an instructor in music at Shurtleff College, and it wasn't long before she saw a need for a music studio in the community. After opening her studio, she organized a group of interested people which was known as the Camerata Chorus. It was during this time that I became acquainted and associated with Miss Dickinson. She took a human interest in all those with whom she came in contact and had a definite influence on their lives. She had a way of drawing you out of your timidity and I can honestly say that it was her influence that encouraged me to take up singing along with music, which was a source of much pleasure to me in former years.

She enjoyed conducting Gilbert and Sullivan operas and other musical plays, in which I had the pleasure of singing principal roles on several occasions.

The last few years before her passing, I had the honor and distinction of being President of the Camerata Chorus. This required many hours of my time day and night, but Miss Dickinson had a way of turning these hours of labor into pleasure, and I always looked forward eagerly to each day's association with her.

She allowed no one to become discouraged because of lack of funds to continue their music or vocal lessons. Money was no object in her life; her interest was in people and the culture of the community.

I am sure that all those who were associated with her, can look back today on those years as the happiest of their lives. Truly, they were an inspiration to me.

9-12-60

Ed. Kremer

29. Miss Katharine V. Dickinson has been "the most unforgettable character" we have known in our 34 years of living in this - - our adopted country of America. Arriving in a new country we were indeed fortunate to meet and be accepted by this gifted lady into her large family of friends.

As our voice teacher and stage director, Miss Dickinson was kind, patient and tolerant of our many faults, while always encouraging us to develop latent talents.

When we reach into our treasure chest of memories we bring forth wonderful Sunday afternoon and evening rehearsals, with a break for pot-luck suppers, the excitement of dress rehearsals and first performances of Gilbert and Sullivan operas. Then there were love feasts in her Studio a few evenings after the final performance. These, and many other happy memories will always make us grateful to the distinguished lady whose smile was like a benediction.

We are also beholden to her for giving us the opportunity of taking part in the musical activities of Alton, Illinois with an outstanding group of kindly people who called themselves: "The Camerata Chorus."

Emma and Gilbert Boyd
1844 Guinda Street
Palo Alto, Calif.

30. It is a privilege and honor to pay tribute to our dear Miss Dickinson. Had there been awards presented to women for outstanding service to the community during her life among us I am sure she would have been the first to be so recognized and the last to feel she was worthy of it.

"Life is not measured by the passage of years, these pass automatically. Life is measured by the meaning given it."

Miss Dickinson's charming graciousness, talent and determination to bring out the best in all those she came in contact with has been an influence which has continued through the years. Her varied interests helped her to guide others into a more useful and concerned way of life she gave meaning to life for many.

I shall always be grateful for the privilege of my association with her.

In loving memory,
Harriet Hyndman Roberts

31. It would take pages to tell what I feel in my heart for Miss Dickinson. She was a wonderful friend and counsellor to me. Her basic principals of voice training have never left me regardless of whom I have studied with since that time.

Today people say my voice still sounds young which I feel is due to the years of careful training she gave me.

Sincerely,
Grace Ostercamp
Burbank, Calif.

32. In gratitude and respect of a dynamic personality, Miss Katharine V. Dickinson. Outstanding in recognizing qualities in others, which lead to the uplifting and betterment of their personality. Coming in contact with her made one feel they were created to fill their "niche in life," with the high purpose and dignity that the Creator had implanted in their bosom.

As was said by a young member of the chorus, "When you thought of yourself a "nobody", she made you feel a "somebody."

May her spirit linger with us, and may those who had contact with her, continue to impart, her spirit, as best they can, to whoever comes their way or shares their life.

With sincere devotion,
Laretta M. Bierbaum

33. One of my fondest girlhood memories is my association with Miss Dickinson. After graduating from high school, I was undecided as to what field I should enter to earn my livelihood. Miss Dickinson suggested teaching school. Her encouragement was instrumental in my choice of a teaching career.

Her understanding of young adult's problems, and her willingness to devote part of her busy life to helpful discussion concerning those problems was one of her most endearing qualities. Her culture, gentleness, and helpfulness were outstanding.

Camerata Chorus meant a great deal to me. I often recall with pleasure the happy Monday evenings spent so profitably in her studio as a member of Camerata.

Mrs. Glen C. Skinner
(Hilda Straube)
4951 48th Avenue North
St. Petersburg 9, Florida

34. In our wonderful world God has placed a few people who radiate encouragement. Such a person was Katharine V. Dickinson. My first contact with her was when I joined the Camerata Chorus, dedicated to helping our community through learning and sharing good music and in any other way each member's talent directed.

I soon found that this group reflected the spirit of their leader.

Jealously, hatred, envy was not among them, just the joy of good music and the finer things of life. We all loved Miss Dickinson.

son. Her efforts knew no bounds in striving to bring out the best in us. Her pet project was the Visiting Nurse Association and the chorus for a number of years gave the proceeds from their entertainments to that and other Alton charities.

In the first entertainment in which I took part, "Chimes of Normandy", given at the old Temple Theatre on Broadway, I was chosen for the role of Village Notary. In looking back at the coaching Miss Dickinson gave me for this part I remember thinking how well she knew how each principal should act out his part and never step out of it. In spite of this patient training there were some comic incidents in the operas through forgotten lines and mistakes.

In the scene showing the "Hiring Fair" where wealthy families came to find household servants, choosing them from a group of boys and girls seeking jobs, it was my part as Village Notary to officiate. I had to walk to the center of the stage to address the people assembled for the hiring and was followed by my attendant carrying the Law Book and the Notary Wand, a long staff like a shepherd's crook. Before my speech to the assemblage I was to turn to my attendant and say, "Hand me my wand!" On the night of the first public performance I turned to give the command, and saw no attendant! My lines would not fit! I gave one look at Miss Dickinson. She smiled and gave me an assuring nod. I took it to mean "Interpolate!" and yelled, "Bring me my wand!" The attendant came running on stage, minus the lower part of his costume which he had not had time to get into. The audience got a big laugh, and the show went on.

It was a joy to work with Miss Dickinson. I would like to dedicate here, a few thoughts to her memory. From the windows of heaven pours the spirit of love and good will that only God knows how to shower on his children. If we tune our lives to His rythm we can receive this love and peace in our hearts. God has His agents to distribute this glory and I truthfully think Miss Dickinson was one of them. God bless her soul! We will never forget what she has meant to us and the fine work she did for our community.

Signed, Fred C. Tuemmler
Camerata Past President

35. My association with Miss Dickinson has influenced every phase of my life. Even to spend five minutes with her left one uplifted. She imparted feeling of appreciation for not only music, but all that is good in life. She was a great teacher of all that is beautiful.

I know that my late husband shared these same feelings which I am trying to express.

Mrs. Oscar J. Paul

36. Although my association with Miss Katharine Dickinson was of short duration, it came at a most impressionable time of my life. She had given me enough incentive that I knew even after her death, that I must continue with the study of music, especially of singing.

Dorothy Bott Evangeloff

— AUGUST, 1960 —

37. Katharine V. Dickinson is still, after 29 years, vividly present in my thoughts and affections. During my ten years of close association with her as a student in the Studio School of Music and as a member of the Camerata Chorus, I was impressed with her deep love for God which manifested itself daily in her dealings with everyone with whom she came in contact.

Her well-spent sacrificial life was not only dedicated to music and other cultural activities, but to all persons who had the good fortune to come under her generous influence. Miss Dickinson possessed an exceptional realization of the dignity of the human person. On numerous occasions in her studio, I was delighted to witness her dealings with the hired help, for she gave them the same consideration she would have extended to a celebrity. This thoughtfulness and consideration required selflessness of a high degree.

Moreover, this self-forgetfulness disclosed to me her magnificent characteristic of appealing to and bringing out the best in her music pupils and in the members of the Camerata Chorus. She could make one feel quite important and so necessary. I can still hear her gracious, "Come right in! We are waiting for you." While Miss Dickinson labored tirelessly early and late each year in order to present a Gilbert-Sullivan opera as perfectly as was humanly possible, and while she wanted it to be a great success, one sensed that she was not working for her own honor and glory. Her one desire was to give the music lovers of Alton true pleasure. Another example of her selfless work was in the presentation of "The Dream of Mary" for two consecutive Christmas seasons. Her sole aim was to give others a big spiritual uplift in the true Christmas spirit. I can still recall her saying, "No tickets! Just a free-will offering!"

Another incident has influenced me over the years. As I walked into the studio one afternoon for a lesson, I heard the words, "Bill, there is a wonderful power in silence." While I was not aware of the exact relationship of the words with Bill's lesson, I never forgot those words. They have caused me more than once to refrain from making remarks which were better left unsaid.

Miss Dickinson was a true friend to each of her students, and we all knew it. She taught us not only a greater knowledge and appreciation of music, but inspired us with high ideals and ambition to develop to the utmost whatever talents God had bestowed on us so that we, in our turn, would be able to help others.

My deep appreciation for this marvelous personality in my life can best be expressed by my earnest endeavor to continue to use all that I have received from her to influence not only my students, but also all others with whom I associate.

I shall be forever grateful to Miss Katharine V. Dickinson who was a living example to me of one who really loved God and her fellowmen.

Mother Alice Marie Fitzgerald, O.S.U.

A LITTLE GIRL GROWS UP IN THE STUDIO

38. It was a very fortunate day for me, when I began piano lessons with Miss Dickinson, at the Studio School of Music, when I was a little girl. All through school I took two piano lessons a week. I greatly enjoyed my work and the many happy hours spent practicing duets, duos and quartettes with some of my studio friends.

After finishing high school I became a cadet teacher in the public schools for two years and so had the afternoons free. This time was spent at the studio where I was very busy but quite content and happy, for where love is, work is a joy.

I was assistant piano teacher, accompanist and became really interested in participating in various activities, as the Camerata Chorus and the Friday Evening Study Group. I completed work in the first and second piano courses, took voice lessons, completed the Public School Music Course and became accompanist for the Camerata Chorus, a position which I held for 16 years.

It was always a great pleasure and inspiration to study and work with Miss Dickinson. Her understanding, patience and encouragement meant a great deal to me and we spent many happy years working together. Through my close association with Miss Dickinson and people of the studio my life has been greatly enriched, for which I am grateful.

Talented and unselfish, Miss Dickinson was always interested in helping people, not only those connected with the studio, but in the community, making Alton a better place because she lived here.

It was a privilege to know Miss Dickinson's family. Her mother, Mrs. C. B. O'Donnell visited her and her sister, Mrs. Wm. A. Hall lived with her for several years. Mrs. Frank N. Henderson (Mary Dickinson) a cousin, also lived in Alton for some time. It was a pleasure to know them and I cherish many fond memories of them.

Our beloved teacher's influence in our lives and her many good deeds will live on through the years.

Edna Sawyer

39. Although I never had any real musical talent or voice, I always loved good music and through my close friendship with Grace Gee, now Mrs. George Ostercamp of Burbank, California. I became more interested in music which I know associates one more closely with the better things of life, the things Miss Dickinson lived and stood for. And I know the time I spent taking lessons from Miss Dickinson and going to Camerata Chorus has had a very definite effect for good in my life.

How well I recall the lessons I took from her and the happy times I spent rehearsing for operaettas under the wonderfully kind and competent supervision of Miss Dickinson. She was such an outstanding person that my memories of her and what I learned from my association with her are so vivid that it seems only a few years ago instead of thirty and more that I was part of the Studio group. They are the kind of memories that help a person grow old gracefully and become a more gracious person, like Miss Dickinson. And How we all need to put forth every effort to grow old gracefully!

Sincerely,

Selma Ash Nimmons
702 Brown St., Alton, Ill.

ONE IN A MILLION!

40. She was my friend - - yes, and my very *close* next door neighbor - - for there was but a sliding door between our studios. Also, she was like a mother to me. I can still hear her saying: "Margaret, we become like that which we most constantly admire." Between the two or three years we were so closely associated, I used to think if I might become just a *bit* like her, I'd be satisfied. I've written that beautiful line of advice in many of my student's expression books and in many autograph albums. It always meant so much to me!

She was very interested in my work and brought out the best in me. She had me read at her lovely annual operettas. The last time was in June 1905. She had me give Tennyson's "Enoch Arden" to Strauss' dramatic musical setting with Mrs. Gration at the piano. We spent hours in practice - - for it took 35 minutes to give it - - but it was a joy to do things for Miss Dickinson; because she was so deeply appreciative.

No one woman ever did so much, and so unselfishly - - for the city of Alton - - as did Katharine V. Dickinson. We who knew and loved her can never forget!

One of her many appreciative friends,

Margaret Slifer Lancaster
33104 Grand River
Farmington, Michigan

41. All who knew Miss Dickinson will not only be able but glad to contribute words and words of praise.

Miss Dickinson was the recognized leader of musical activities in the community. She was personally interested in everyone, and showed great pride in the accomplishments and successes of those with whom she came in contact. She was sought out by all her wide spread circle of friends in their times of both joy and sorrow. Although her life was a very busy one, Miss Dickinson found time for all, with words of encouragement, advice and helpfulness.

Mrs. B. C. Richardson
524 East 7th Street
Alton, Illinois

42. Miss Katharine V. Dickinson rendered a great service to our community by conducting each year for many years a performance of one of the Gilbert and Sullivan Operas. By my participating in one or two of them, and attending most of the other performances, I learned to love Gilbert and Sullivan. Whenever I have seen these operas performed, I am reminded of Miss Dickinson's performances of them, and of how tirelessly, patiently, and graciously she worked to produce them.

It was a privilege to have known Miss Katharine V. Dickinson.

Sincerely,

Gertrude Horn
537 East 5th Street
Alton, Illinois

43. In reviewing my long friendship with Miss Katharine V. Dickinson I recall with pleasure my earliest acquaintance with her as a cub reporter for the Alton Evening Telegraph. In the early days as a member of the editorial staff of the Telegraph I, like other reporters, followed a "beat" each day.

One of my "stopping places" was the Studio School of Music — and daily I was greeted with a smile from Miss Dickinson and given some bits of news — not necessarily something to do with the Studio.

Gradually people who had news items for the Telegraph acquainted with my daily visits to the Studio "dropped" items with Miss Dickinson, confident that they would reach the society page of the paper.

I was also close to Miss Dickinson in the early days of the Alton Business and Professional Women's Club, the Alton Health Council, the promotion of Alton's annual observance of Music week and other civic activities in which she was the leading figure. I was a great admirer of Miss Dickinson — and knew well what she meant to Alton.

Amelia B. Ringemann

44. "As sunset's rays paint the clouded sky so the reflection of your life enriches our horizon."

I can think of no one to whom these words apply more aptly than Miss Dickinson. She was a lovely lady, devoted to her work and her students. She was my teacher during some of my most impressionable years and I adored her. Her faith in me created a desire to do my best and I have had an interest in music through these many years.

Helen Byford Osborne

IN MEMORY OF KATHARINE V. DICKINSON

45. I was a member of the Camerata Chorus at one time and enjoyed the rehearsals and preparations for the operettas very much. Then later on I played violin in the orchestra which played the accompaniments for the operattas. These rehearsals sometimes were long and strenuous, but we had fun also and had many a good time together.

Whenever I witness a Gilbert and Sullivan opera I always think of Miss Dickinson. I was greatly inspired by Miss Dickinson and feel that my life has been enriched by working with her. Miss Dickinson had a very wonderful personality.

With fond memories,

Emma P. Horn

KITTY DICKINSON

46. Aunt Kitty Dickinson meant many things to many people. She was the first one to bring the beauty of music into the civic life of Alton. She gave so much of herself to children and grown ups alike. To me, as a child, she seemed to be the epitome of poise, dignity, and beauty. I remember only one time that I realized she was vulnerable and human as anyone. I went for my bi-weekly singing lesson and Aunt Kitty was lying in bed with Flu. There wasn't any one to "do" for her, and she was mighty miserable. She must have been pretty hungry for she asked me to make a cup of cocoa for her. Now I knew nothing what so ever about making cocoa so I had to ask her each step of the way. Her final instruction was to add a pinch of salt. In amazement I exclaimed "why Aunt Kitty I didn't know that you added salt to cocoa." She quietly but firmly took hold of my hand and said "My dear, you must remember that you take a grain of salt with EVERY THING." How very right she was. Her gentle words of advice have come back to me many times.

From these far away years I still remember Aunt Kitty when she was really in her greatest element, her yearly production of opera with her beloved Camerata Chorus. She looked so great and beautiful, standing straight and proud in front of the orchestra. She waved her baton with such a force that beautiful sounds *did* come out of very amateur throats. Yes, that one night a year was her true triumph. It was worth all the hard weeks of work that she spent getting the opera in shape. When she donned her beautiful blue georgette, beaded dress, touched a little rouge to her cheeks, a faint dab of lip stick to her mouth, and stepped up on that podium, she was as great as the greatest prima donna.

I say "thank you Aunt Kitty for the many wonderful things you have given all of us who knew you."

Nancy Cousley Dunagan
Deming, New Mexico

47. At age seven I began taking piano lessons at the Studio of Miss K. V. Dickinson, on Belle Street. To a girl of seven Miss Dickinson was a lovely, wonderful person. Each week I rode eight miles by horse and buggy for my piano lesson in her cheerful Studio.

Pleasant memories of participation in the Camerata Chorus and plays, like The Birth of the Opera had a definite bearing on

my teaching work. Years later I completed voice lessons in The Studio at my graduating concert, with Miss Edna Sawyer as accompanist and Mr. Arthur Horn supplying the obligato to my songs.

(One of the earliest alumnae of The Studio School of Music.)

Sincerely,

Katherine Lindley Chamberlain
R.R. 1, Godfrey, Ill.

A TRIBUTE TO KATHARINE V. DICKINSON

48. Whenever I think of my association with Miss Dickinson a warm grateful feeling completely envelopes me. I am sure my contact was unique among all others in her Studio, for I was the lone member of my race taking part in the activities there. I know that made problems for her in keeping every one happy there and I have always considered her as first among Human Relations leaders in Alton.

Miss Dickinson seemed to think I had a rare voice. I only thought if I worked hard I could make some sort of success through it and told her that. "Tut-tut!" she said, "I know a rare voice when I hear one."

I came here in 1910 from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. My music teacher there was a New England Conservatory graduate and when I told her I was coming to Alton and wondered what to do to keep on with my studies immediately she told me of her classmate from the Conservatory who, she thought, was teaching at a small college in Alton and she was sure I could go to her. Her name was Miss K. V. Dickinson.

When I came to Alton I soon found Miss Dickinson had her own Studio and was not only very happy to hear from her friend but glad that I had come to her. From then on I was Miss Dickinson's devoted pupil. The following October, 1910, I invited her to my church to hear The Ladies Uganda Chorus, which I had started and trained, give their first small concert. She had encouraged me to get the ladies from different choirs to organize into a glee club and my pastor had insisted that I take over the church choir. I am still with the Union Baptist Choir. The Uganda Chorus worked twenty years and then disbanded.

The Studio work gave me great pleasure, the students were real friends, and after my work began to show good results Miss Dickinson always asked me to take part in the different activities

at the Studio. Then the Uganda Ladies Chorus played in one of the earlier Operettas given by the Camerata, then, later, Miss Dickinson had me sing on civic event programs and my mixed quartette was appointed by the Liberty Loan Department of World War I to sing for War Bond sales. I have the record that was sent by the War Department for the radio announcement of our appearance to sing at the different theatres. That was a wonderful experience for all of us. My work continued through many years in Voice and Public School music.

I suppose all of the Studio members have amusing and interesting memories of "The Blue Room". One evening we had a "Guess Who" concert there. Everyone sang behind a large screen, then the audience guessed who the performer was. No one seemed to know who I could possibly be. Well known singers from all over town were named. Then Miss Rae Ryrie called out "That's Miss Harriett Robinson! I'd know her voice anywhere." I told Miss Dickinson I must have a queer voice to sound like so many people, but I won the prize. The judges said Miss Rae did not have to guess, she *knew* my voice and songs. So many pleasant experiences came to me at the Studio that I have forgotten any small upsets. Miss Dickinson always encouraged me and tried to keep from me any unhappy event.

So, time marched on through nine years to Graduation! One of my classmates, Miss Emma Sawyer accompanied me in many concerts we gave. Through these years Miss Dickinson would say "My Children, mind me well." and we all tried. Miss Dickinson encouraged me to bring to Alton those of the outstanding musicians and singers of my race who were open to engagement. The first was Mme. Azalia Hackley, greatest soprano of my race, a teacher for years with De Refskie in Paris. Clarence C. White, a violinist, and R. Nathaniel Dett, a composer. His compositions were in use among the Studio pupils. He was presented to the Alton audience by the McDowell club.

A wonderful week of concerts marked the 1919 Graduation Class of The Studio School of Music. First was the graduation at the Studio. Miss Katherine Lindley now Mrs. Chamberlain of Godfrey, gave her recital that night, then Miss Elder, now Mrs. Meyer, at the Elks Club, Miss Sawyer next, then my concert at Union Baptist Church. Miss Dickinson accompanied me that night.

After that I became a member of the St. Louis Music Association and then joined the National Association of Negro Musicians in 1921. I have attended thirty-three of these conventions,

was National Chairman of the Nominating Board for fifteen years and all over the nation have met and made friends with many other musicians, all through the encouragement of Dear Miss Katharine Dickinson.

The last thing I was able to do for her was to sing, "At the Cry of the Lost Bird" as she lay in bed at her studio waiting for the ambulance to take her to the hospital. Mrs. Doris S. Rue will remember this. We were standing by her bed, after I had fixed her beautiful hair and she lay there waiting. She turned her head. "Doris," she said, "You go down stairs and play for her to sing to me." Mrs. Rue quietly went downstairs, I followed her and sang. It was the saddest thing I ever did, but I was happy and grateful that I had been associated so long with this dearest and greatest Lady I had ever known.

Miss Harriett I. Robinson

IN TRIBUTE MARCH, 1961

49. Katharine V. Dickinson was a distinguished woman and in her life proved that success comes to the gentle, as to the dynamic and the forceful.

A few generations ago when elegance was more esteemed than now the best description of an estimable woman was, "she is a 'Lady'"; this embraced innate culture, charm, intelligence, graciousness. And such a "lady" was Miss Katharine Dickinson. She was forceful too, as a dedicated, devoted woman is forceful.

Her accomplishments? Not in material monuments or endowments of wealth, her deeds are graven in the consciousness of all whom she knew and served. And all people she came to know she served, either in the surpassing magic of music or in transmitting to them the serenity of life as Miss Dickinson lived it. Her monument is the love that still wells up in the hearts of those who knew her in the organizations to help others that she fostered, groups that have grown into vital welfare forces of today. She has confounded the Bard; the good she did has lived after her.

On September 18, 1931, I wrote the story of Miss Dickinson's death for the Alton Evening Telegraph. Two paragraphs from that seem to stand out in expression of Miss Dickinson's work in Alton, her own character and the love of her pupils and friends.

"Miss Dickinson had been in failing health for several months. On Aug. 2 she was taken to St. Anthony's Infirmary, but there was no improvement and she gradually weakened. Her death has occurred in the morning of the day the District Vocal Audition is to take place in Alton. She had been district secretary and had worked enthusiastically on its promotion until her illness forced her to retire to the infirmary. Minus her guidance and saddened by her absence, the audition will be held as previously announced, this evening at the Y.W.C.A. auditorium. It was felt by friends and relatives that the woman who had been Alton's foremost exponent of music and art would have so desired.

"Miss Dickinson continued her beloved work when many less determined people would have relinquished their tasks. Even when her health began to fail, she persisted, giving up only when her health required that she be taken to St. Anthony's. There, her

fight against illness had the attention of the countless persons who had come to love and admire her, and hoped against hope that this woman who had labored so unselfishly, who so long had served others, might recover. In the last few days of her illness when it was known this could not be, there came a deep sadness among those who knew her and her work."

—30—

Joseph J. Dromgoole
Assistant Editor
Alton Evening Telegraph

LAST LETTER RECEIVED

June 15, 1961
1727 Baker Street
Bakersfield, California

Dear Miss Dickinson, —

50. What a reprieve, for debtors as myself, to recall all you gave and shared, to record our praise — what a privilege!

It has been more than forty years since I first climbed the Spaulding stairway, since I first sat in your ante-room — with its burlap walls — and waited on the threshold of a strange experience. Strange then, because it was unknown — strange now, because it remains unique.

You plied the needle of your art in mysterious ways your wonders to perform, and accomplished your aims in such subtle ways that your tapestried efforts gradually became part and parcel of your pupil. Now it is difficult to distinguish, or to separate the Dickinson influence from the whole of that pupil. But the kaleidoscope of memory brings many remembrances into focus.

Your teaching included much more than the usual learning-to-play-the-piano type lessons. Certainly a portion of each lesson was concerned with the teaching needed to transfer written notes to audible tones. Sight reading, fingering and scales were all skills you imparted patiently as the pupil slowly learned some of the slight-of-hand necessary to translate musical scores into musical sounds. The ultimate gain in my case was not the trunk of technique, but exposure to the whole forest called Music, and the love and beauty that was Katharine V. Dickinson. Today's love and need makes music a basic necessity. As you bent the twig long ago — so it remains today.

The lessons each school morning were scheduled to fit the rail of time. It is Saturdays I best remember. Those Saturday sessions, judged by conventional standards, may have been slightly unorthodox, but they offered much benefit, laced together with excitement. My lengthy lesson was sandwiched between the lessons of others. My teacher believed even the reluctant pupil could reap the benefit of inspiration, so sometimes I sat and listened to senior students practice or take their lesson. Other times I curled up in the corner to read or practice writing scales and clefs — content to know Edward McDowell looked over my shoulder from his autographed likeness on the wall. After the long, morning session — when the studio was quiet and deserted — we retired, for lunch, to the postage stamp kitchen. What did we eat? I only remember that it seemed a feast to your special guest.

Occasionally, I was permitted to watch the hair dressing ritual whose high priestess was a pleasant faced negro woman. She may have been a voice pupil or perhaps she only sang as she worked — whichever, she had a beautiful voice.

The eye of childhood measured you to be a towering height. Today's bifocal gaze must still look up to reach your regal head. In public performance, I admired your stately stance and the hush in the audience as you tapped the orchestra to attention with the wand of your authority. In that instant, your gown became the velvet of royalty, your command the edict of the land, and one small girl — seated near the rear exit — wished to stand and shout (for all to hear), "She is my teacher!". Such dreamed of display is the privilege of eight year olds, but such possession is ours "for keeps".

I read my first Greek mythology in your studio, saw my first masterpieces — on the pictured page —; all in books from your shelves. And I think you knew, for I am certain you laid them all within my reach.

What of all those tickets? I wonder if they were really "extras". Whatever their record in the Spaulding seating chart, they brought dress circle experience to your pupil — her first Gilbert and Sullivan, her first "real" composer (Percy Grainger), her introduction to oratorios and cantatas and the unforgettable magic of Tony Sarg's Puppets.

I remember lessons with Agnes Cadey, the tribulations of tempo, the ordeal of recitals, the inability to learn pieces "by heart", and how you hummed the melody for small, forgetful girls. I remember the next lesson noted in your sprawling script that defied decipher and so remained the secret of its scribe.

And how could I forget all the music you loaned me, and all the lessons without charge. My talent did not merit such gifts, so they could have been only the mark of your love to share and the measure of what you had to share.

How many dark, winter mornings I boarded the street car at Joesting's corner for a solitary ride; skipped down the steep steps (was it 4th Street?); lingered past Beall Brothers (to squint at the sparking acetelyne torches); turned into Belle Street and entered the Alton Police Station. What a peculiar path to reach all that waited upstairs for us lucky ones — the Dickinson pupils.

I saw you last, the fall of 1930, and we wept together because we had so much to remember. Today — more than thirty years later — I still remember those things that make me remain —

always your grateful

Sara Mae Brown Lewis
(Mrs. Leland Lewis)
1727 Baker St.
Bakersfield, California

The Studio
School of Music
Effron, Illinois

My dear Lads - The golden links of
Friendship are strengthened through
chancing fires. The metal of these
links are brought not only to strength
but to shining beauty by such test.

The links that have bound us to-
gether for many years have had the
test of purging fires from without,
but upon our hearthstone has
burned the fire of lofty ambition
and earnest loves, with these
flames our vision has ascended to
the clear blue sky above with the
shining sun marking the height
of our aspiration.

We have felt the fire of love in our
hearts - that fire which purges from

the cross of self-seeking and
envy & bitter ness - that fire which
tempers & strengthens the metal of
our souls; and so it is that our
strain has been sufficient to
serve these hicks, dear Gals,
dear friends & companions of my
"dumb" way."

By the flame in our hearts, by
endurance of hardships, by our
work together, by our Love,
our Faith, our Loyalty we are
bound in the golden hicks of
Friendship - The hicks that
make a circle round. In
this circle I place the modest
feet of my gratitude to you
and for you, and accept-

This new token of your
generous love <sup>The Studio
School of Music
Alton, Illinois</sup> as the symbol
of the precious mortal of life
- Mr.

Love devoted & grateful friend.
Katharine V. Ripstein

A translation of the manuscript

My dear Girls — The golden links of friendship are strengthened through cleansing fires and the metals of these links are brought, not only to strength but to shining beauty, by such test.

The links that have bound us together for many years have had the test of purging fires from without, but upon our heartstone has burned the fire of lofty ambition and earnest hopes, and with these flames our vision has ascended to the clear blue sky above with the shining sun marking the limit of our aspiration.

We have felt the fire of love in our hearts — that fire which purges from the dross of self seeking and envy and bitterness — that fire which tempers and strengthens the metal of our souls, and so it is that no strain has been sufficient to sever these links, dear Girls, dear friends and companions of my "Sunlit Way."

By the flame in our hearts, by endurance of hardship, by our work *together*, by one Love, one Faith, one Loyalty we are bound in the golden links of Friendship — the links that make a circle round. In this circle I place the modest jewel of my gratitude to you and for you, and accept this token of your generous love as the symbol of the precious metal of life, — love.

Your devoted and grateful friend

Katharine V. Dickinson

WITH KATHARINE V. DICKINSON
INTO THE YEARS

And what does the message in her Tribute tell?
Just this: she lived her dedicated life so well
That, though no children from her earthly body
came,
Her spirit brought to life Creation's flame
In hearts and minds she touched that will yet light
Endless torches to inspire Creative flight.

M. E. S. C.

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